

Listing of Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claims 1-22 (Cancelled).

23. (Currently Amended) An assembly of microcomponents comprising:
~~at least two microcomponents fabricated with a separation distance therebetween; and~~
~~at least one of said at least two microcomponents including an extension part comprising an~~
~~extension member that is movably extendable toward another of said at least two microcomponents to~~
~~reduce said separation distance therebetween~~
a first microcomponent fabricated over a substrate;
a second microcomponent fabricated over the substrate; and
a separate extension member not anchored directly to the substrate, the extension member being
movable relative to the substrate for reconfiguring between a first position and a second position, wherein:
when in the first position, the extension member is laterally positioned internal to the
second microcomponent and is laterally movable relative to the second microcomponent; and
when in the second position, the extension member is engaged with the second
microcomponent and extends beyond a perimeter of the second microcomponent to contact the
first microcomponent.

24. (Currently Amended) The assembly of claim 23 wherein a ~~separation of at least said~~
separation distance is required between ~~said at least two~~ the first and second microcomponents during their
fabrication of ~~said at least two microcomponents~~.

25. (Cancelled).

26. (Cancelled).

27. (Currently Amended) The assembly of claim 23 wherein ~~said~~ the extension member is ~~movably extendable to reduce said separation distance~~ movable relative to the substrate and the second microcomponent in a manner that requires no electrical power.

28. (Currently Amended) The assembly of claim 23 wherein ~~said at least one of said at least two~~ the first and second microcomponents ~~further comprises~~ collectively comprise a latching mechanism to latch ~~said~~ the extension member once it is extended to ~~a desired~~ the second position.

29. (Currently Amended) The assembly of claim 28 wherein ~~said~~ the latching mechanism comprises ~~at least one~~ a notch and ~~at least one~~ an engaging member arranged to engage ~~said at least one~~ the notch.

30. (Currently Amended) The assembly of claim 29 wherein ~~said at least one~~ the notch is included on ~~said~~ the extension member, and wherein ~~said at least one~~ the engaging member ~~is included on~~ at least one extends from an arm that is ~~positionally fixed relative~~ integral to ~~said~~ the extension member.

31. (Currently Amended) The assembly of claim 23 wherein ~~said~~ the assembly is insensitive to etching inaccuracy encountered in a process utilized to fabricate ~~said~~ the first and second microcomponents.

32. (Currently Amended) The assembly of claim 31 wherein ~~said~~ the extension part comprises features arranged such that ~~said~~ the extension part member compensates for ~~said~~ the etching inaccuracy.

33. (Currently Amended) The assembly of claim 32 wherein ~~said~~ the extension part member compensates for ~~said~~ the etching inaccuracy in a manner that results in ~~said~~ the extension member being movably extendable to reduce ~~said~~ as-fabricated separation space between the first and second microcomponents to provide separation distance consistent with separation distance that would be recognized if ~~said~~ the etching inaccuracy were not present.

34. (Original) The assembly of claim 31 wherein ~~said~~ etching inaccuracy includes inaccuracy selected from the group consisting of: over-etching and under-etching.

35. (Previously Presented) The assembly of claim 23 wherein said assembly comprises an assembly selected from the group consisting of:
a linear stepper, a rotational stepper, and a planetary bearing.

36. (Currently Amended) The assembly of claim 23 wherein ~~at least one of said at least two~~ the first and second microcomponents is totally released from ~~[[a]]~~ the substrate.

37. (Currently Amended) The assembly of claim 36 wherein positional accuracy of ~~said the~~ totally released ~~microcomponent~~ one of the first and second microcomponents is maintained at least in part by ~~said the~~ extension part member when the extension member is in the second position.

38. (Cancelled).

39. (Currently Amended) The assembly of claim 23 wherein the extension member is configured to impart movement to at least one of the ~~at least two~~ first and second microcomponents.

40. (Previously Presented) The assembly of claim 39 wherein the extension member is coupled to an actuator configured to generate movement of the extension member.

41. (Currently Amended) The assembly of claim 23 wherein the extension member includes a notch, and wherein ~~at least one of the at least two microcomponents is positionally fixed relative to another of the at least two microcomponents and~~ the second microcomponent includes an arm having a barbed end configured to engage the notch.

42. (Currently Amended) The assembly of claim 41 wherein the arm is configured to outwardly deflect in response to ~~reducing the separation distance between the at least two microcomponents~~ movement of the extension member from the first position towards the second position, and wherein the arm is further configured such that the arm deflection relaxes in response to the engagement of the notch and the barbed end.

43. (Currently Amended) An apparatus, comprising:
a first microcomponent; and
a second microcomponent separated from the first microcomponent by a separation distance,
wherein the separation distance is adjustable in response to ~~orientation~~ a relative position of a first portion
of the second microcomponent relative to a second portion of the second microcomponent, and wherein the
first portion is completely released from a substrate on which the first and second microcomponents are
fabricated.

44. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 43 wherein the second portion of the second
microcomponent is a stationary portion relative to the first microcomponent and the first portion of the
second microcomponent is a movable portion relative to the stationary portion and the first
microcomponent.

45. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 43 wherein the first portion is movable
between a plurality of positions relative to the second portion, and wherein the first and second portions are
engaged in one of the plurality of positions.

46. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 43 wherein the first portion is movable
between a plurality of positions relative to the second portion, and wherein at least one of the first and
second portions is configured to deflect in response to movement of the first portion towards at least one of
the plurality of positions.

47. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 43 wherein the first microcomponent is one of
a plurality of first microcomponents and the second microcomponent is one of a plurality of second
microcomponents each separated from a corresponding one of the plurality of first microcomponents by a
corresponding one of a plurality of separation distances, wherein each of the plurality of separation
distances is adjustable in response to orientation of a movable portion of a corresponding one of the
plurality of second microcomponents relative to a stationary portion of the corresponding one of the
plurality of second microcomponents.

48. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 43 wherein a first one of the first and second microcomponents includes a barbed feature and a second one of the first and second microcomponents includes a notched feature, wherein the barbed and notched feature are configured to engage to substantially constrain relative movement of the first and second portions.

49. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 43 wherein the first portion of the second microcomponent is configured to interface with a gripper interface that is configured to apply a motive force to the first portion for the orientation of the first portion.

50. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 43 wherein the first portion of the second microcomponent is configured to interface with a tweezer interface that is configured to apply a motive force to the first portion for the orientation of the first portion.

51. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 43 wherein the first portion of the second microcomponent is configured to interface with a probe interface that is configured to apply a motive force to the first portion for the orientation of the first portion.

52. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 43 wherein the first portion of the second microcomponent includes an aperture configured to receive a device that is configured to thereby apply a motive force to the first portion for the orientation of the first portion, wherein the device is selected from the group consisting of a gripper device, a tweezer device, and a probe device.

53. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 43 wherein the separation distance is a minimum distance between a first edge of the first microcomponent and a second edge of the second microcomponent, wherein at least a portion of a first profile of the first edge substantially conforms to at least a portion of a second profile of the second edge.

54. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 53 wherein at least a portion of the first profile has a first tooth-edged configuration and at least a portion of the second profile has a second tooth-edged configuration corresponding to the first tooth-edged configuration.

55. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 43 wherein at least a portion of at least one of the first and second microcomponents is a rotational gear.

56. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 43 wherein at least a portion of at least a first one of the first and second microcomponents is a rotational gear that is selectively rotatable relative to a second one of the first and second microcomponents based on adjustment of the separation distance.

57. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 43 wherein ~~the first and second microcomponents are located on a substrate, wherein~~ at least one of the first microcomponent, the first portion of the second microcomponent, and the second portion of the second microcomponent is positionally fixed relative to the substrate, such that the relative orientation of the first and second portions of the second microcomponent includes movement of at least one of the first and second portions relative to the substrate.

58. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 43 wherein ~~the first and second microcomponents are located on a substrate, wherein~~ at least one of the first microcomponent, the first portion of the second microcomponent, and the second portion of the second microcomponent is positionally fixed relative to the substrate, such that the relative orientation of the first and second portions of the second microcomponent includes lateral movement of at least one of the first and second portions across the substrate.

59. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 43 wherein ~~the first and second microcomponents are located on a substrate, wherein~~ a first one of the first and second portions of the second microcomponent is positionally fixed relative to the substrate via one of direct and indirect coupling to the substrate, and wherein a second one of the first and second portions of the second microcomponent is not directly coupled to the substrate but is positionally fixable relative to the substrate by selectable indirect coupling to the substrate via engagement between the first and second portions.

60. (New) A micro-scale apparatus, comprising:
a first microcomponent fabricated over a substrate;
a second microcomponent fabricated over the substrate; and
a separate extension member not anchored directly to the substrate, the extension member being movable relative to the substrate for reconfiguring between a first position and a second position, wherein:
when in the first position, the extension member is laterally positioned internal to the second microcomponent and is laterally movable relative to the second microcomponent;
when in the second position, the extension member is engaged with the second microcomponent and extends beyond a perimeter of the second microcomponent to contact the first microcomponent;
a minimum separation distance exists between proximate edges of the first microcomponent and the extension member, wherein at least a portion of a first profile of the first microcomponent edge substantially conforms to at least a portion of a second profile of the extension member edge; and
at least a portion of the first profile has a first tooth-edged configuration and at least a portion of the second profile has a second tooth-edged configuration configured for engagement with the first tooth-edged configuration.
61. (New) The apparatus of claim 60 wherein the extension member is movable relative to the substrate and the second microcomponent in a manner that requires no electrical power.
62. (New) The apparatus of claim 60 wherein neither of the first microcomponent and the extension member are coupled directly to the substrate.